

APPENDIX A

CFE Quality & Performance; Commissioning & Strategy

Children's Centre Services Funding Reduction; Proposals for Implementation

Summary of Consultation Responses and Resulting Actions

Date

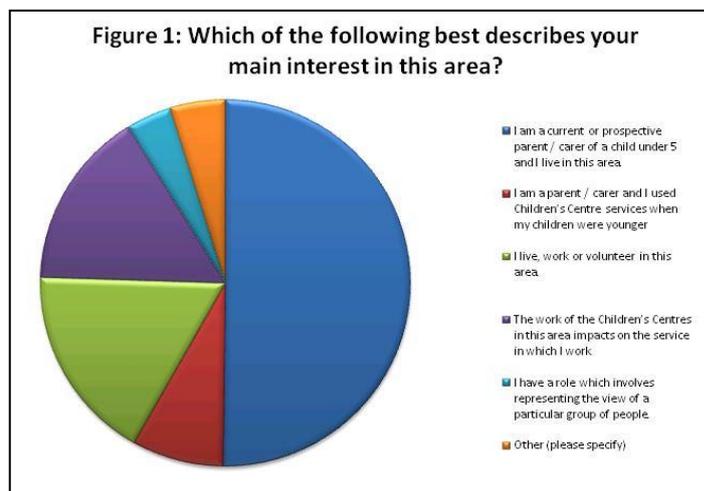
3 May 2016

1. The consultation consisted of the following: -

- On-line 'survey-monkey' questionnaire (702 responses received)¹;
- Open invitation to respond via email (ccconsultation@northamptonshire.gov.uk) or post to which we received 6 individual and 5 organisational responses; and
- 14 focus group meetings which were attended by 63 parents / carers and 9 partners.

The proposed changes, along with the reasons that they must be made, are summarised in [Help](#)

[Us Shape Children's Centre Services in Northamptonshire](#), which accompanied the questionnaire.



2. Key themes were as follows: -

- Amongst the parents and carers that attended the focus groups it was generally accepted that the Council has no choice but to reduce the money available to fund Children's Centre Services.
- There is general agreement that, where such choices must be made, the reduced allocation of funding should be focused upon delivering services to families, rather than paying for buildings.
- Considerable concern was expressed where Centres will no longer be used; in the focus groups this was abated when it was made clear that services will still be available in all areas of the county.
- Open access groups that are supported by our targeted Children's Centre Services providers are highly valued throughout the county and concern was about the loss of such groups.
- There was generally support for making a financial contribution to such groups.
- Targeting services to families in need of greater support was a contentious issue; geographic areas of high need largely supported this but areas with proportionately less need expressed feeling 'penalised' for 'doing well'.
- Every group where parents / carers were present raised concerns about sessions offered by the library and the limitations of such. There is still an ongoing lack of awareness about the extent and nature of the Library Service's role in Children's Centre Services delivery.
- Organisational and individual respondents from South Northamptonshire expressed concern at the extent of the reductions in their area, as did organisation and individuals from Corby. As might be expected where there are reductions in funding and as such to the provision of sensitive services, there is considerable disquiet regarding the proposals made within this consultation.

¹ 727 responses were received. 25 of these responses were received from two IP address (but with very similar comments / 'voice'). These made significant allegations about one named Centre. These have been reported to MASH but were excluded from the analysis.

3. The following recommendations are made: -

- Many parents / carers and professionals are very concerned about the potential / perceived loss of open access / drop-in universal services provided specifically and providers will be asked to note this concern in developing their proposals.
- There is also a willingness to contribute toward the cost of such provision in many areas. Additionally many parents / carers are willing to attend such sessions provided by voluntary groups, and even to form such groups to make the provision possible. Increased use of volunteers is also supported. Both the Council and our providers should support and facilitate opportunities to do so.
- Many respondents expressed concern that, by reducing open access sessions and similar where parents might go for early help, or professionals might be able to offer such help where they identify emerging issues, families will deteriorate into crisis and some will ultimately become in need of statutory intervention. This is recognised by respondents as being significantly higher in cost. A very high number of respondents pointed out that if families are not able to get 'early help' for their problems, far greater spends will be required within the statutory social care system to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children
- Where venues are no longer to be used, replacements facilities, such as the use of community venues should be consistent and widely promoted to enable families to be confident of the provision.
- Liaison with the universal services available in libraries is crucial, to allow signposting and referral, as is clear promotion of both the nature and availability of the services in libraries. It is clear from the consultation that there is a widespread misunderstanding regarding the role of libraries in the provision of Children's Centre Services.
- Where venues are to be opened part-time only, clear messages regarding the actual times of opening (both in Children's Centres Services venues, and in libraries) is required.
- The views of South Northamptonshire organisations of parents / carers regarding the proposed move to cease the use of the Children's Centre Services venue in Towcester should be considered and alternatives considered by Action for Children.

4. The full Analysis and Cabinet Report can be found [here](#).

Appendix A

Consultation document: 'Help us to shape Children's Services in Northamptonshire'



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Appendix B

Focus Groups

Format

We delivered a short presentation explaining why the changes were needed, and why we wanted to talk with the group. A facilitated discussion followed exploring what the parents / carers, and in some cases partners / stakeholders, valued from their Children's Centre Services. We encouraged suggestions as to how we could achieve the required savings whilst retaining the services that they valued.

Presentation

The slides shown below were used in Corby; each area was similar excepting that the savings and proposals for the LOT were shown.

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Help us to Shape Children's Centre Services in Northamptonshire

Corby Discussion Groups
22nd and 26th April 2016

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Why are we here?

- The council has to reduce spending by £61m this year
- This includes £20.2m reduction to Children's Services
- NCC budget proposal consultation took place from December 2015 to February 2016
- Approved by Full Council on 29th February 2016

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How does this affect Children's Centre Services?

- Funding Allocation agreed by Cabinet on 8th March 2016.
- £3m to be found from the spend on Children's Centre Services
- Services to be focused on areas of greatest need
- Significant changes must be made to services in every area of the county.

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What does this mean for your area?

- The amount we spend on Children's Centre Services in Corby will reduce from £3,139,686 to £854,423.
- We need your help to make sure that the changes made are those that are the least damaging for families in Corby.

Area	% Change
Northampton East	16.99%
Corby	35.03%
South Northamptonshire	47.56%

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What's happening elsewhere in England?

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What proposals have been made?

Proposals for the Corby area

- Outreach will be delivered at a range of venues including the local schools and community centres.

Exeter and Woodchester

- Significantly reduce the social work and family support teams and cease all services with voluntary sector organisations. This will reduce services and groups available to vulnerable families.

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What proposals have been made?

Help us better understand your views on our proposals

Pen Green and Kingswood

- Retain existing staff wherever possible and maintain existing services on an outreach basis from Pen Green.
- Retain the Kingswood base but with significantly fewer staff and therefore the capacity to deliver fewer services than at present.
- Make a severe cut to Service Level Agreements with voluntary sector organisations across Corby which would reduce these services considerably.
- Shut down weekend services, reduce the social work team, and some group-work interventions at Pen Green.

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What proposals have been made?

Help us better understand your views on our proposals



- Outreach will be delivered at a range of venues including the local schools and community centres.
- Staff will continue to visit children and families in their own homes where this is the best way to support them.
- Services for all families will continue to be delivered by Health Visitors.
- All local Libraries will be used to deliver universal Children's Centre Services.

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Next steps

Help us better understand your views on our proposals



- Collate your comments and concerns
- Collate responses to the on-line questionnaires
- Write analysis for consideration by Councillors

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Our Consultation

Help us better understand your views on our proposals

- Our questionnaire is on line and you can find it by clicking the link below.
<https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/NCC/ChildrensCentres/2014>
- If you would like to put forward your views without using the questionnaire, you can write to us at: -
Children's Centre Consultation, Northamptonshire County Council, Room 128 Old Guild Hall, County Hall, Northampton, NN2 2ED
- Or you can email us at: -
CCConsultation@northamptonshire.gov.uk

The consultation close at midnight on Thursday 28th April 2016

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Thank you for your time and your help

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Summary of responses



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Appendix C

Questionnaire



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Questionnaire.pdf